(e) recommend revocation of licence for non-compliance of terms and conditions of licence;

(f) ensure compliance of terms and conditions of licence;

(g) protect the interest of customers of telecommunication services;

(h) settle disputes between service providers;

(i) fix rates for providing telecommunications within and out-side India; and

(j) monitor the quality of service and conduct periodical surveys of such service provided by service providers.

3. While the role and powers conferred on the TRAI envisage a substantial measure of autonomy to the Authority, the functions relating to grant/revocation of licences and fixing terms and conditions of licences still vest with the Central Government. As per Section 25(2) of the Telecom Regulatory of India Act, 1997, the TRAI shall, in exercise of its powers and performance of its functions, be bound by such directions on questions of policy as the Central Government may give in writing to it from time to time.

4. The TRAI has been set up mainly with a view to perform regulatory functions and, thereby, provide a level playing field in the Telecom Sector. As a service provider, the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) would come within the scope of TRAI's functions but its responsibilities, including in the field of policy, are not affected.

Post Offices in Rental Building

6348. SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the post offices/sub post offices in Bihar are still housed in the rented accommodation in Bihar even after completion of buildings meant for post offices and sub post offices;

(b) if so, whether it is resulting in heavy revenue losses;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which the Government propose of shift the post offices/sub post offices in the newly constructed buildings particularly about the completion of building for the sub post office of Simri Bakhtiyarpur?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) No. All sub post offices are housed in departmental buildings where the construction work is completed and has been handed over to the department.

(b) No. Question does not arise.

(c) Question does not arise.

(d) The on-going projects for construction of Post office buildings are likely to be completed in 1997-98 and in the case of Simri Bakhtiyarpur sub post office, the likely date of completion is 30.9.97.

More Money From Cellular Operators

6349. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to extract more money from companies operating cellular phones services in four metroes; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Tender for Trunk Automatic Exchange

6350. SHRI I.D. SWAMI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether after opening of a tender relating to trunk automatic exchange, the quotation was revised upward;

(b) if so, the full facts thereof alongwith the reasons for revising the quotation price after opening the tender;

(c) whether the Government propose to enquire into this matter and to took to guilty officials responsible for this serious fraud;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons thereof;

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Department agreed to enhance the price based on negotiations.

(b) An open tender no. 117-10/94-MMD for procurement of 2.77 lakh lines of digital TAX equipment was opened on 26.4.94. After evaluation of the bids and approval of the competent authority, Advance Purchase Orders were placed on 14.9.94. Since this equipment was being purchased for the first time, orders were to be placed only after the successful validation of the equipment in the DOT's network. The reasons for revising the quoted price after opening the tender are indicated below:-

(i) Site specifications different from the model specifications given in the tender.

(ii) Wide variation in foreign exchange during the period.

(iii) Increase in inflation, etc.

Since the TAX equipment was required urgently the Department set up an empowered Committee to sort out all the issues. After detailed discussions with the suppliers on technical and commercial issues, the Committee recommended per circuit cost of Rs. 4266/- instead of

Rs. 3306/- indicated in the Advance Purchase Orders. The equipment has now been supplied as per the new offer.

(c) to (e) Question does not arise.

Amount Earmarked for Promotion of Tourism in Andhra Pradesh

6351. DR. Y.S. RAJASEKHARA REDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the amount earmarked to promote tourism in Andhra Pradesh during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) the details of new places proposed to be promoted in the State;

(c) whether there are any proposals to construct new hotels by the India Tourism Development Corporation during the said period in Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b) Central financial assistance for the development of tourism is provided on the basis of specific proposals received from the concerned State/Union Territory Governments each year. The projects/proposals for the 1997-98 have not been identified.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Railway Line between Sabarimala and Angamaly

6352. SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated cost of Angamaly-Muvattupuzha-Pala-Erumely-Sabarimala railway line, sector-wise break-up;

(b) the funds earmarked by the Government for above line, sector-wise;

(c) the reasons for granting the less amount for above line; and

(d) the time by which the above line is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) The estimated cost of the line is as under:-

Angamaly-Erumely-343 crs.

Erumely-Sabarimala-207 crs.

(b) The funds for Railway works are allotted project-wise and not sectorwise. Rs. 1 lac has been allotted for this line during 97-98.

(c) This line has been included in the Budget 97-98 subject to obtaining necessary clearances. The work would be taken up after the required clearances are received and hence a token provision has been made.

(d) Will depend upon the availability of resources.

Proposal of Air Lanka for Sale of Shares

6353. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air Lanka proposes to sell 40 percent shares to some foreign partner;

(b) if so, whether the Air India and the Indian Airlines have submitted their bids for the same;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the present status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) The Government has no such information.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Villages without Post Offices in Gujarat

6354. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have done any survey in Gujarat regarding the villages which do not have post offices at present;

(b) if so, the details thereof, district-wise;

(c) by when the Government propose of open post offices in all the villages of the State;

(d) whether the Government propose to make available mobile post offices in such villages of the State for the time being to cater the postal need of villages; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details of the villages which do not have post offices at present district-wise are given in the enclosed statements.

(c) Post Offices are opened under Annual Plans subject to norm based justification and availability of resources. During the Annual Plan, 1997-98, it is proposed to 25 Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices in the villages of Gujarat.

(d) No, Sir.